

City of Santa Barbara
CREEKS RESTORATION AND WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Creeks Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Program Citizens Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair DeVoe at 5:38 p.m. at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Myfanwy DeVoe (Chair)	Environmental/Land Use
Daniel E. Hochman (Vice Chair)	Hotel/Lodging Industry
Michael Jordan	Business Community
Bruce Klobucher	Ocean Users
Jeff Phillips	Environmental/Land Use
David Pritchett	Environmental/Land Use
George Weber	Environmental/Land Use

Members Absent

Daniel Wilson	Community at Large
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Liaison Representatives Present

Iya Falcone	City Council Liaison
Beebe Longstreet	Park and Recreation Commission

Liaison Representatives Absent

Rob Almy	County Project Clean Water Liaison
John Jostes	Planning Commission Liaison

Staff Present

Jill E. Zachary	Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager
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3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 18, 2006.

ACTION:

Hochman moved, seconded by Pritchett, and passed 6/0 that the Committee approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 18, 2006.

4. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Jordan reported back on the Ordinance Committee meeting pertaining to Private Sewer Lateral Maintenance and said that the Ordinance Committee discussed using the “point of sale” of homes as a trigger for sewer lateral inspections but the preferred that a specific period of time be determined in which residents would routinely have their laterals inspected. Mr. Jordan stated that the Ordinance Committee does not want the sewer lateral ordinance to come at an expense to other Water Resources Department capital programs.

Councilmember Falcone arrived at 5:43 p.m.

Mr. Pritchett added that the proposed sewer lateral ordinance was presented to the Advisory Committee in June 2005 and that the Ordinance Committee had many of the same concerns as the Advisory Committee. He said that he understood the Ordinance Committee to still be open to using the “point of sale” trigger. He mentioned that a follow-up meeting occurred and that neither he nor Mr. Jordan were able to attend.

Ms. Zachary stated that the proposed sewer lateral ordinance will continue to be discussed and suggested that the Advisory Committee review current subcommittees in order to establish new subcommittees related to current topics. She said that this will establish a mechanism for Committee members to attend and report back on meetings of interest to the Committee.

Councilmember Falcone stated that the realtors and local environmental groups met but she has not yet received a briefing of that meeting. She said that all options are still open, including using the “point of sale” trigger.

Mr. Phillips reported that the site visit to the Haley Street Storm Drain Diversion project was informative. He stated that Committee members were able to see the CDS unit which removes trash and debris from the storm drain.

Mr. Jordan announced that on Wednesday, March 8, 2006 from 9:00 am to 3:30 p.m., the City Council will be reviewing the proposed Veronica Meadows development project.

- Mr. Pritchett asked why the Veronica Meadows project would be going before Council since it did not pass at the Planning Commission meeting.
 - Councilmember Falcone responded that the Planning Commission was unable to reach consensus. Instead, the Planning Commission has forwarded the project to the City Council. She said that approval of the Veronica Meadows project will require annexation of County land.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Santa Barbara Airport Wetland Restoration Projects

John Gray, URS Corporation, gave a presentation on the Santa Barbara Airport Wetland Restoration Projects. He said that the airport is located within the historic boundaries of the Goleta Slough (Slough) and that a significant amount of the Slough has been filled-in since the early 1990's due to agriculture, and the construction of the Marine Air Station and the University of California.

Dr. Gray stated that in the early 1980's, the Airport Department (Airport) executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Department of Fish and Game to form an ecological reserve and that most of the wetlands on the Airport property are located within this reserve. He said that in order to protect the wetlands, the MOU contained agreed-upon maintenance practices and the requirement of gaining approval from the California Department of Fish and Game prior to making an impact within the wetland.

Dr. Gray stated that the Goleta Slough Management Committee (GSMC) was formed in 1991 to work cooperatively to improve the health of the Slough and associated creeks. He said that this committee includes Airport staff, regulatory agencies, environmental groups, and landowners. He said that a management plan was prepared to identify and prioritize restoration objectives with the primary actions being to 1) support grant funding, 2) provide technical feedback on restoration projects, 3) review of development projects, and 4) share resources. Dr. Gray stated that the GSMC has provided valuable leadership and energy to maintain interest in the Slough, and that the Management Plan has provided a long-term and effective tool to guide restoration and management decisions.

Dr. Gray outlined the management and stewardship of the Slough. He said that the Airport has the primary responsibility of protecting the wetlands and creeks because they are the main landowner and that their actions are subject to City policies although the Airport has its own Local Coastal Plan with wetland protection policies. Dr. Gray said that the Airport has used various opportunities over the past ten years to fund wetland and creek restoration projects in order to improve the Slough.

Dr. Gray said that in 1999, the Airport completed the Safety Area Grading Project

and that the impacts to wetlands near the runways was mitigated by restoring approximately 30 acres along the Slough margins. He said that this was the first major restoration project by the Airport, and within the Slough. In 2001, the Airport began the permitting process to approve the Airport Safety Project (ASP), which was approved in 2003. Dr. Gray said that the object of the ASP is to bring safety areas at each end of the main runway up to current FAA standards and that the length of the runway would not increase. He said that the new safety area on the west end of the runway required the relocation of Tecolotito Creek, impacting seasonal wetlands.

Mr. Klobucher arrived at 6:12 p.m.

Dr. Gray stated that mitigation for the ASP includes the following four elements:

1. Create nine acres of high tidal creek channel habitat along the new creek location.
2. Create 12 acres of seasonal wetlands in old upland area.
3. Create four acres of seasonal wetlands by removing old Marine roads.
4. Weed and plant 12 acres of berms along Tecolotito Creek.

Dr. Gray stated that a field experiment is taking place to determine the feasibility of restoring the tidal influence to the Slough without increasing the number of birds hit by airplanes (bird-strike hazard). He said that the two-acre basin was created at the end of 2005 and monitoring of the program was initiated. Dr. Gray said that the tidal influence is expected to increase the biological productivity and diversity while the tidal basin is expected to reduce bird-strike hazards and that the results will have significant long-term implications for Slough.

Dr. Gray said that Airport restoration projects differ from Creeks Division restoration projects. He said that the Airport restores more wetlands with a primary emphasis is on wildlife whereas the Creeks Division restores creeks and has multiple objectives. He said that the plants being used at the airport are different from those used in creek restoration projects. Dr. Gray stated that because the airport is located at the bottom of the watershed, there is less opportunity to improve water quality. He said that there is also less opportunity at the airport for public education while there is a greater ability to protect restored areas from human disturbance.

Dr. Gray stated that both the Airport Department and the Creeks Division restoration projects have an emphasis on sound restoration planning and design. He said that both use local, native plant sources and both use long-term maintenance and monitoring to ensure success.

Committee Discussion:

Mr. Jordan asked why Arundo is not a problem in the wetlands at the airport. He asked if mitigation is technically a land-swap. He added that it is unfortunate that the public can not to view the wetlands due to security issues.

- Dr. Gray responded that Arundo requires fresh water and the Slough is tidal water. Dr. Gray responded that mitigation is actually the creation of new wetlands in a 4-to-1 ratio of created wetlands to disturbed wetlands.

Mr. Weber asked if the water is brackish. He asked if the water is marine fish habitat.

- Dr. Gray responded that the water is tidal and because the mouth of the Slough is generally closed, it is not good habitat for marine fish.

Councilmember Falcone remarked that Tecolotito Creek has been moved many times throughout its history. She asked if the pollution could be treated and if the PHAER Zone model would be followed. Councilmember Falcone asked what mitigation measures would take place if the bird-strike test fails.

- Dr. Gray responded that it would be difficult to treat water because of the quantities and elevation. He responded that restoration projects are subject to the City's IPM policies. Dr. Gray responded that if the bird-strike experiment does not work, then the hole would be filled in and that other lands on airport property could be restored.

Ms. DeVoe said that she was confused as to why the FAA felt that bird-strikes would increase whereas City staff felt they would decrease.

- Dr. Gray explained that a two-year study was conducted and the FAA supported the experiment. He said that tidal basins that fluctuate are being created to attract small birds away from the runway.

Ms. Zachary said that both departments are researching the most effective, physical/cultural, non-toxic weed abatement methods. Ms. Zachary added that it is not yet known if less-toxic products can be used in aquatic environments. She said that the Airport is challenged because it is located at the bottom of the watershed and that a long-range goal could be to work with other agencies or municipalities in order to reduce their sources of pollution.

Mr. Pritchett added that airports are generally built in highly productive wetlands because the land is flat and inexpensive. He said that Santa Barbara's effort to take on this field experiment set a precedent nationwide.

5. FY 2005 Year End Report

Ms. Zachary, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager, reviewed the FY05 year-end expenditures. She stated that program revenue was \$2.2 million (5% above projected Measure B revenue), augmented by \$118,829 interest revenue (137% above projection), and \$8,000 in grant funds from Santa Barbara Beautiful. Ms. Zachary said that \$615,000 were transferred to the Capital Program. She said that the FY05 budget also included \$489,633 carried over from the FY04 operating budget \$1.9 million carried over from the FY04 Capital Program.

Ms. Zachary stated that the operating budget expenditures totaled \$2.1 million, which is 79% of the total budget. She said that the unspent funds would be placed

in the unappropriated reserve account. Ms. Zachary said that the expenditures by major budget category are as follows:

- Salaries and Benefits – 24.5%
- Supplies/Professional Services - 40%
- Special Projects and Capital Transfers – 9%
- Capital Program Transfer – 24%

Ms. Zachary explained expenditures by program area. She said that although the budget was built to 50% for water quality, 25% for creek restoration, and 25% for community outreach, the actual expenditures were 47%, 36%, and 17%, respectively. Ms. Zachary stated that creek restoration expenditures were at 36% because the Creeks Stewards program was launched as well as maintenance of the Old Mission Creek at Bohnett Park restoration project. She stated that water quality expenditures include creek clean-up efforts, water quality lab analysis, DNA-based Microbial Source Tracking research, and staff time. She said that community outreach expenditures were 17% of the operating budget.

Ms. Zachary stated that in FY05, \$500,000 were transferred to the capital program budget for the Old Mission Creek at West Figueroa restoration project (\$125K), Las Positas Valley Restoration (\$125K), Arroyo Burro Estuary Restoration (\$200K), and the Catch Basin Debris Screens (\$50K). She said that 64% of the capital program expenditures were for water quality and 36% went to creek restoration projects. The capital program balance at year end was \$2,352,155.

Ms. Zachary stated that the FY06 capital program budget consists of \$2,352,155 that was rolled-over from FY05, \$450,000 that was allocated for FY06, and \$925,000 of appropriated grant funds. She said that the division is expecting an additional \$677,930 in grant funds to be appropriated in late February. Ms. Zachary detailed the budgets and expenditures for active capital programs.

Committee Discussion:

Mr. Pritchett asked if the Creeks Budget Subcommittee would review the budget for FY07 although the budget was created for two years.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the FY07 budget can be amended this year.

Mr. Hochman asked why some line items are not fully expended. He asked if additional work could have been done with the remaining funds. Mr. Hochman asked when unspent funds of completed capital projects would roll-over to the next fiscal year. Mr. Hochman asked if additional catch basin inserts are going to be installed.

- Ms. Zachary responded that not all funds in a line item are expended for various reasons including the reduced cost of a contract, or uncertainty of project cost when building the budget. She responded that at the end of each fiscal year, the capital accounts are assessed and closed when appropriate. Ms. Zachary responded that additional catch basin inserts

would be installed on the Westside.

Mr. Jordan asked if other City departments have access to Measure B funds that are not appropriated or encumbered. He asked how much money is unappropriated. Mr. Jordan said that he is concerned about persistent public lobbying to use Measure B funds for non-creek related projects.

- Ms. Zachary responded that when the City Council has approved the budget then the funds are allocated to a specific purpose. She responded that there are no funds in the Creeks Division that are available to other City departments. She responded that the unappropriated reserve is approximately \$2.5 million and will remain in the reserve fund until the City Council approves an appropriation.
- Mr. Hochman responded that the *Program Funding Guidelines* for spending Measure B funds has been adopted by City Council and acts as a filter for projects that can be funded through Measure B.
- Ms. Falcone said the Committee has been clear as to the purpose of the Measure B expenditures.

Mr. Klobucher asked about maintenance of Capital Projects. He asked which departments or divisions fund Mutt Mitt expenses.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the Creeks Division establishes a line item in the operating budget to cover the maintenance of capital projects and that the Parks Division shares the cost of Mutt Mitts with the Creeks Division.

8. COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

a. Election of Chair

Chair DeVoe handed the gavel over to Mr. Hochman.

ACTION:

Jordan moved, seconded by Phillips, and passed 7/0 that Ms. DeVoe remain Chair through 2006.

b. Election of Vice Chair

Mr. Hochman retuned the gavel to Chair DeVoe.

Mr. Pritchett recommended that the Vice Chair position be held by the Committee member with the most seniority that has not served as Vice Chair. He added that Mr. Wilson had stated an interest in acting as Vice Chair for 2006.

ACTION:

Pritchett moved, seconded by Hochman, and passed 7/0 that Mr. Jordan act as Vice Chair through 2006.

Councilmember Falcone left at 7:44 p.m.

9. STAFF REPORTS

c. Manager's Program Update

Ms. Zachary reported that the Steelhead Festival, sponsored by the Community Environmental Council, is scheduled for Sunday, February 26th at the Santa Barbara Zoo. She said that the Creeks Division will be participating in the event and funding a portion of it. She added that a 5k run will be a part of this event.

Ms. Zachary said that a reception for the unveiling of the Steelhead public art display will be held Wednesday, February 17th at the Faulkner Gallery at 5:00 p.m. She said that Creeks Divisions purchased a steelhead fish sculpture for future outreach and public events.

Ms. Zachary reported that the *Steelhead, Creeks, and Water Quality* forum would be held Wednesday, February 22nd at the Faulkner Gallery. She said that guest speakers include Dr. Lisa Thompson and Dr. Craig Fusaro. She said that a number of organizations are working on Southern steelhead trout recovery efforts and will have information on their projects available at the forum.

Ms. Zachary stated that a site visit to the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration Project has been scheduled for Friday, February 17, 2006 at 12:15 p.m.

Mr. Jordan stated that he appreciated the HTML newsletter that he received from the Creeks Division.

d. Tentative Meeting Agenda

Ms. Zachary reviewed the tentative meeting agenda.

10. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m. there being no further business to come before the Committee,

ACTION:

Hochman moved, seconded by Jordan, and passed 7/0 that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill E. Zachary
Creek Restoration and Water Quality Improvement
Program Manager